

Section 1: The Mentoring Process

Who is a Mentor?

Mentoring is a confidential process where teachers share their expertise and provide one another with feedback, support, and assistance. It provides opportunities for beginning teachers as well as initially licensed teachers to participate in observations, self-assessments, and conversations to improve the quality of interaction and environments for children in pre-kindergarten classrooms. Much of this work takes place in the teacher's classroom as formally trained mentors observe and coach. Recommendations are made for professional development, personal reflection, and use of other learning resources.

The **North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE)** enumerates **eight standards** mentors demonstrate. Skills necessary are

1. Establishment of productive helping relationships
2. Effective communication skills
3. Working knowledge of mentoring relationships
4. Knowledge of diverse roles of mentoring relationships
5. Understanding of the adult as a learner
6. Ability to utilize appropriate instruments and strategies for promoting growth in the beginning/initially licensed teacher
7. Ability to assist beginning/initially licensed teachers in developing and utilizing materials and techniques for instructional presentation
8. Ability to assist beginning/initially licensed teachers in applying learning theory and research to plan and implement effective classroom instruction

As mentors in the Teacher Licensure Unit (TLU) work with More at Four teachers they are expected to demonstrate these characteristics.

- Care and concern
- Sound advice
- Sense of humor
- Active listening
- Trustworthiness
- Professionalism
- Empathy
- Experience
- Willingness to help
- Knowledge of how children learn
- Knowledge of what children learn
- Knowledge of how children learn and develop

What is a Mentor's Role?

A mentor guides the beginning/initially licensed teacher through the teacher licensure process (up to three years) with support. This happens best by having a sense of

- Collaboration
- Problem-solving orientation
- Life-long learning
- Learning from experience
- Continual self-evaluation
- Critical thinking
- Reflection
- Goal setting

Mentoring success depends on the quality of the relationship between the mentor and the teacher. It begins with the ability to trust, to talk openly, and exchange information in a comfortable setting.

The first time the TLU mentor and MAF teacher meet certain points need to be covered.

Suggestions for this preliminary conversation are covered in the **Getting-to-Know-You Conference**. A form for this is included. Some of the things to cover here are

- Personal information
- Feelings about the process and relationship
- Ways to communicate
- Individual learning styles
- Tentative schedules and calendars
- Willingness to work together

The **mentor's role** in the PKKTPAI teacher evaluation process is to ensure that each teacher working toward licensure has every opportunity to learn how to be the best teacher she/he can be and to successfully achieve Teacher Licensure. The **teacher's responsibility** is to self-assess and reflect on the work of the classroom. The **evaluator provides** the formal observations and documentation used to determine satisfactory performance. The **center director** (administrator) supports the efforts of the mentor and teacher in the Teacher Licensure process.

The components or activities for this process are listed. As these are described, the roles and responsibilities for each are indicated

1. Pre-Conference Questions
2. PKKTPAI Snap Shots (no ratings)
3. Coaching
4. Data Collection
5. Conferences
6. Documentation
7. Individual Growth Plan (IGP)
8. On-going Support

A time line which includes roles and responsibilities for teacher, and mentor, evaluator, and center director further summarizes mentoring and evaluation activities. **Possible Roles for Mentors** (attachment) provides a self assessment for mentors to check on the functions they perform.

Possible Roles for Mentors

Helper:

- A giver of time, energy and support
- A “broker” to link internal and external resources
- A resource of knowledge, experience, and methods

Colleague:

- An advocate for the professional and the profession
- A celebrant to share the joy and build professional self-esteem
- A listener who cares about ideas, dreams, and concerns

Model:

- A facilitator who enables one to discover new skills and to become an independent, mature professional
- A questioner to promote thinking, analysis diagnosis, problem-solving, and planning
- A visionary with dreams to achieve
- A reflective practitioner who observes, gives feedback, and seeks learning in every situation
- A situational leader who seizes the teachable moment and creates opportunities for growth by being a:
 - Teacher who suggest and assists in skill and knowledge acquisition
 - Motivator who encourages, challenges, and discovers undeveloped potential
 - Leader who sets examples and guides
 - Needs assessor who recognizes stages of development and readiness for growth